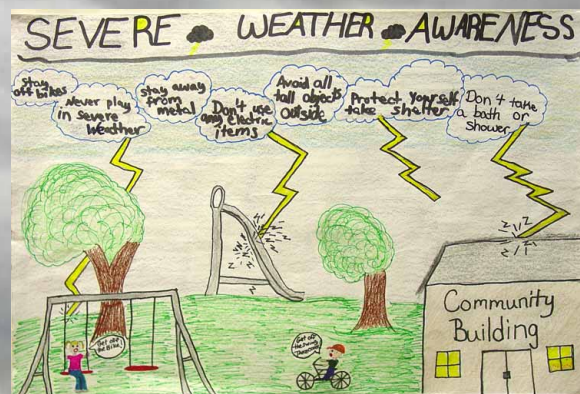
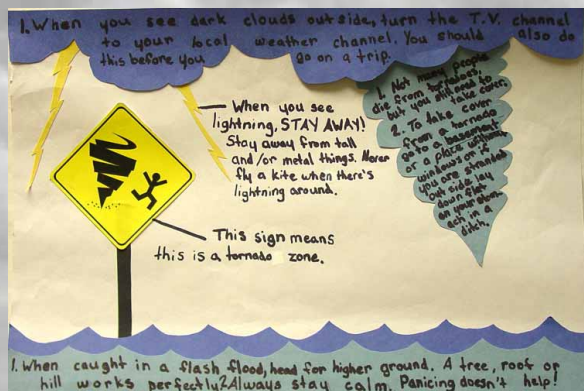


THE BEACON



Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

MARCH
2005



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SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK PROCLAIMED

Governor signs proclamation, greets poster contest winners

A full house was on hand Tuesday, March 15 as Governor Dave Heineman signed the proclamation officially naming the week of March 28 through April 1 "Severe Weather Awareness Week in Nebraska." Granted, most of the audience was there for a myriad of other proclamations being signed by the Governor, but four young artists and their families were there very specifically for the Weather Week ceremony.

The four youngsters were the winners of the Severe Weather Week Poster Contest, sponsored by the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, and the National Weather Service.

The contest is open to all fourth grade students in the state, and is designed to teach school children about the dangers of severe weather and how to be safe during storms.

The four received savings bonds and

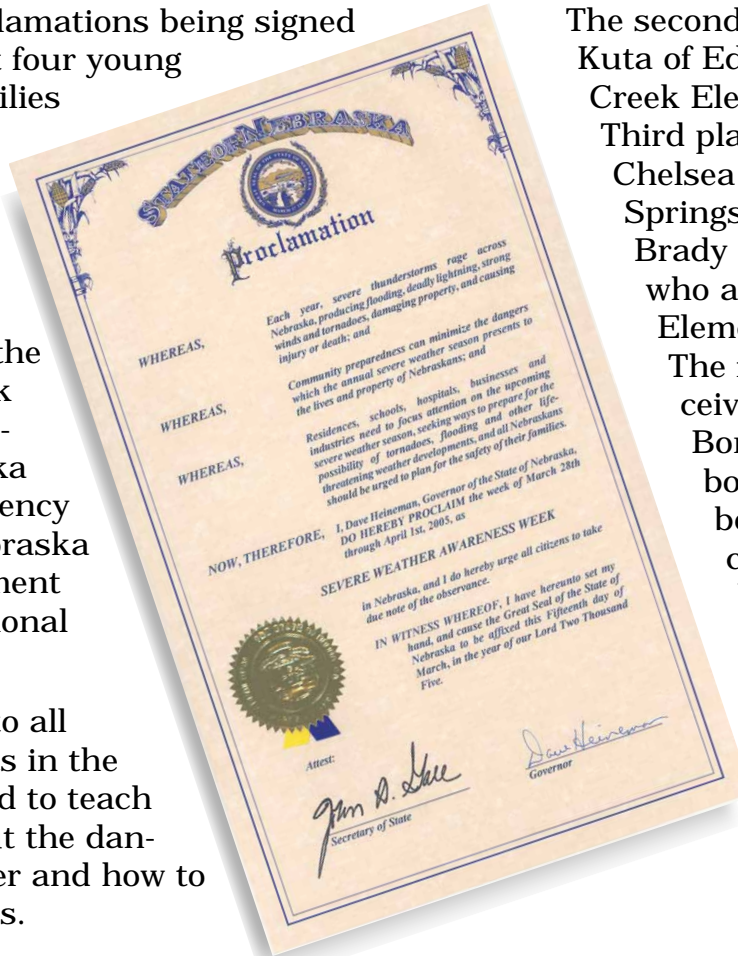
NOAA Weather Radios for their accomplishments.

The first place winner is Abby Stewart of Norfolk. Abby is a student at Christ Lutheran Elementary in Norfolk.

The second place winner is Andrew Kuta of Edgar, who attends Sandy Creek Elementary in Fairfield.

Third place honors went to Chelsea Michaelis of Blue Springs, and in fourth place is Brady Shipley, also of Edgar, who also attends Sandy Creek Elementary.

The first place winner receives a \$200 U.S. Savings Bond, second place a \$150 bond, third place a \$100 bond and fourth a \$50 cash prize. The savings bonds are provided by the Nebraska Association of Emergency Management, and the cash prize is supplied by the National Weather Service. Each winner also received a NOAA Weather Radio.



SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK IN NEBRASKA, IOWA MARCH 28 THROUGH APRIL 1, 2005 -- TORNADO DRILL SET

Each spring, the National Weather Service, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, the Iowa Emergency Management Division, and county emergency management officials conduct Severe Weather Awareness Week to promote severe weather safety to the citizens of Iowa and Nebraska.

In 2005, the National Weather Service will issue Public Information Statements once each day during Severe Weather Awareness Week. A different topic will be discussed each day. The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency will also be providing information to the media for dissemination to the public.

TORNADO DRILL DAY is Wednesday, March 30th beginning at 10 am.

The timeline for the drill is:

- 8 am CST** Weather Service Office (WFO) Omaha/Valley will test paging/email software to 38 county Emergency managers concerning a severe weather conference call.
- 930 am CST** Emergency Manager Conference call at about 930 am.
- 10 AM CST** Storm Prediction Center (SPC) in Norman, OK issues a TEST tornado watch for Nebraska and Iowa.
- 1010 AM CST** WFOs in Omaha and Sioux Falls issues TEST tornado warnings for their areas valid for 20 minutes.
- 1020 AM CST/920 AM MST** WFO Hastings issues a TEST tornado warning for their area valid for 20 minutes.
WFOs Omaha and Sioux Falls issue Severe Weather Statements (SVS's) as follow-ups to their tornado warnings.
- 1030 AM CST/930 AM MST** WFO Cheyenne issues a TEST tornado warning for their area valid for 20 minutes.
WFO Hastings issues a follow-up SVS for their tornado Warning.
WFOs Omaha and Sioux Falls issue SVS's to expire their Tornado Warnings.
- 1035 AM CST/935 AM MST** WFO North Platte issues a TEST tornado warning for their area valid for 20 minutes.
- 1040 AM CST/940 AM MST** WFO Goodland issues a TEST tornado warning for their area valid for 20 minutes.
WFO Hastings issues a SVS to expire their Tornado Warnings.
WFO Cheyenne issues a follow-up SVS for their tornado Warning.
- 1045 AM CST/945 AM MST** WFO North Platte issues a follow-up SVS for their tornado Warning.
- 1050 AM CST/950 AM MST** WFO Cheyenne issues a SVS to expire their Tornado Warnings.
WFO Goodland issues a follow-up SVS for their tornado Warning.
- 1055 AM CST/ 955 AM MST** WFO North Platte issues a SVS to expire their Tornado Warnings.
- 1100AM CST/1000 AM MST** WFO Goodland issues a SVS to expire their Tornado Warnings.
TEST Tornado Watch Expires

The TEST tornado warnings will be issued using the Emergency Alert System (EAS) TOR code.

All Severe Weather Awareness Week Information plus links to national preparedness material will be available on the Omaha/Valley National Weather Service site at www.crh.noaa.gov/oax/ For more information or to contact us for an interview, please contact Warning Coordination Meteorologist Brian Smith for more information at 402-359-5166, X726 or brian.e.smith@noaa.gov.

2005 NEBRASKA SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS POSTER CONTEST WINNERS

Here are the 2005 poster contest winners for Severe Weather Awareness Week. The first place winner is Abby Stewart of Norfolk. Abby is a student at Christ Lutheran Elementary in Norfolk. The second place winner is Andrew Kuta of Edgar, who attends Sandy Creek Elementary in Fairfield. Third place honors went to Chelsea Michaelis of Blue Springs, and in fourth place is Brady Shipley, also of Edgar, who also attends Sandy Creek Elementary.



First Place
Abby Stewart
Christ Lutheran, Norfolk



Second Place
Andrew Kuta
Sandy Creek Elementary

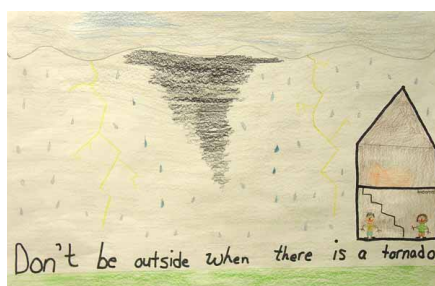


Third Place
Chelsea Michaelis
Blue Springs Elementary

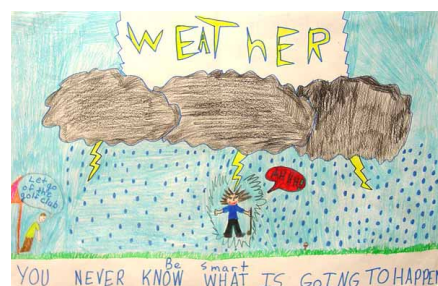


Fourth Place
Brady Shipley
Sandy Creek Elementary

2005 NEBRASKA SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS POSTER CONTEST HONORABLE MENTIONS



Chantel Adams
Paddock Lane 4K, Beatrice



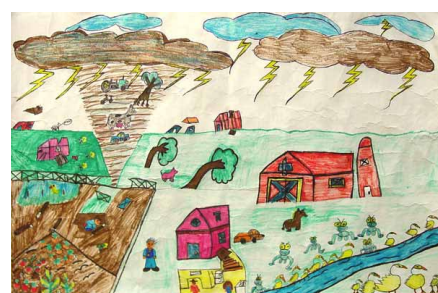
Britni Tucker
Ord Elementary



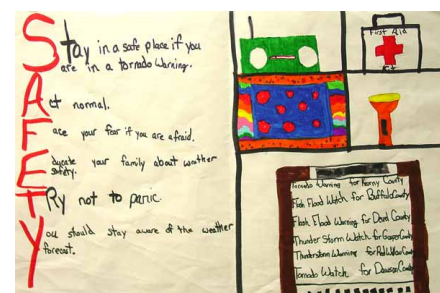
Taylor Schultee
Paddock Lane 4K, Beatrice



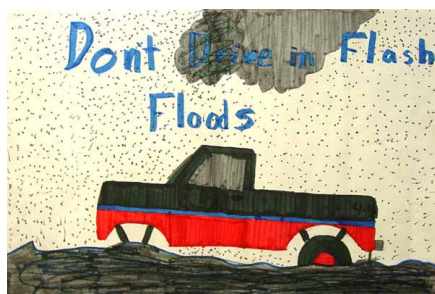
Makenna Brunken
Burwell Elementary



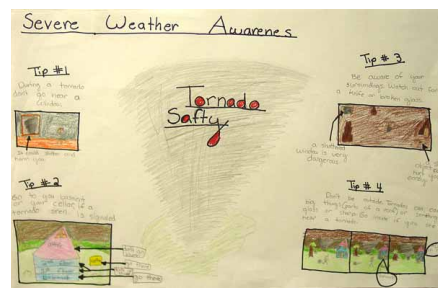
Teresita Nava Nava
Roper Elementary, Lincoln



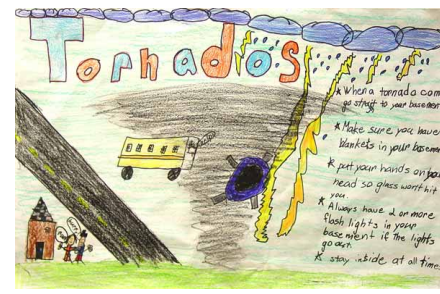
Sarah Crawford
Arapahoe Elementary



Nathan Schmitt
Laurel-Concord Elementary



Evelyn Swanson
Eastridge Elementary, Lincoln



Tayler Erickson
Sutton Public Schools

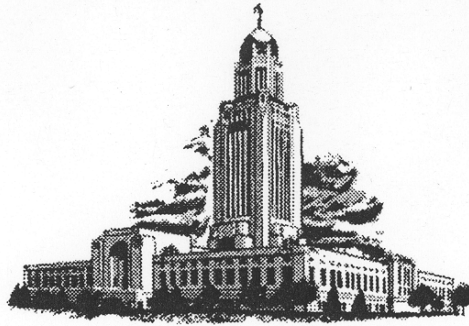


Hanah Barnard
Cedar Elementary, Beatrice



Nicole Zvolanek
Southern Elementary,
Blue Springs

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MAR 08 2005
NEMA FISCAL



STATE *of* NEBRASKA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

LINCOLN

EXECUTIVE ORDER

05-02

WHEREAS, the State of Nebraska has a responsibility to insure coordinated and efficient emergency and disaster response for its citizens; and

WHEREAS, National Incident Management System (NIMS) is recognized by the Federal Department of Homeland Security as the standardized incident command system for this coordinated response; and

WHEREAS, local and state Emergency Operations Plans incorporate the management principles of NIMS; and

WHEREAS, the components of NIMS are already an integral part of various incident management activities throughout Nebraska, including current emergency management training and exercising; and

WHEREAS, the collective input and guidance from all federal, state, local and tribal homeland security partners has been, and will continue to be, vital to the development, effective implementation and utilization of a comprehensive NIMS; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary and desirable that all federal, state, local and tribal emergency agencies and personnel coordinate their efforts to effectively and efficiently provide the highest levels of incident management; and

WHEREAS, the NIMS standardized procedures for managing personnel, communications, facilities and resources will improve the state's ability to use federal funding to enhance local and state agency readiness, maintain first responder safety, and streamline the incident management process; and

(continued from page 6)

WHEREAS, Homeland Security Directive (HSPD)-5 directs the development and administration of NIMS to provide a consistent nationwide approach for federal, state, local and tribal governments to work together more effectively and efficiently to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size of or complexity; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Dave Heineman, Governor of the State of Nebraska, under provisions of RRS 81-829.40, do hereby direct the adoption of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) by all appropriate entities in the State by October, 2005. NIMS will be the accepted standard to guide emergency and disaster response by all 1st responders and adherence will be expected.

I further direct the Governor's Homeland Security Policy Group and the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency to oversee the development and implementation of compliance standards for NIMS at the State and local jurisdictional level.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the Great Seal of the State of Nebraska to be affixed the 4th day of ~~February~~ March in the year of our Lord two thousand and five.

Dave Heineman

David Heineman
Governor

Attest:

John Gale
John Gale
Secretary of State



STATE WILDFIRE COUNCIL STUDIES LOOMING CHALLENGES

Personnel, rising costs concerns for committee

The Nebraska Wildfire Council's February 2005 meeting dealt in large part with two issues – a shortage of red-carded firefighters and aerial suppression costs.



National Guard personnel holding red cards – the official federal certification required for firefighting activities on federal lands – are in relatively short supply this year. Many of the guardsmen who have served in firefighting capacities in the past have now been deployed and are unavailable. Of those who have returned or are still in the area, many will need recertification. However, there are no funds currently earmarked for this training.

Some discussion centered on the priority for use of money that may be available. The consensus of the Council was that it is more important to have the air element available than to get more soldiers red carded. If the money is directed to air operations, Guard troops can be used for non-red card support work. Although there is a shortage of ready-to-use red-carded troops, in the case of a long term event troops would be trained on or near the site.

Bambi® bucket training is part of the helicopter annual training, but acquiring and keeping helicopters and pilots certified is not an allowable expense. Cost for the use of Guard helicopters is \$3,700/hour for the Blackhawks. In the future there will be Chinook helicopters in Grand Island with a larger load capacity. Their cost would be \$6,300/hour. The National Forest Service has eight aircraft certified nationally to fly this year, but it is unknown exactly where these eight will be stationed.

A second issue concerns the problem of Local Incident Commanders keeping track of accumulating time and dollars for aerial suppression. As the hourly amounts being paid to applicators increases, the \$10,000 state spending threshold is accumulating more quickly. Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Assistant Director Al Berndt fears that some time soon a Rural Fire District will be liable for a large bill. Two issues are contributing to the problem: 1) higher cost per hour and 2) the use of multiple planes.

Representatives of the State Fire Marshal's Office will make a point of bringing this up at various meeting of Firefighters and Fire Chiefs around the State

The Nebraska Forestry Service has included a special Red page in this year's "Yellow Book" with this information, and what steps must be taken to continue using the Governor's Emergency Fund pay the applicators.

The National Forest Service reported that last year was a mild fire season. There are now drier conditions in the northern tier of their region. They did respond to some FEMA assignments in Florida.

NEMA's report included three basic elements. The Climate Assessment and Response Committee (CARC) is in the process of scheduling a meeting for early spring on drought; the Governor's Drought Taskforce will also be meeting soon, probably in conjunction with the Governor's

(Continued on page 7)

STATE WILDFIRE COUNCIL

(Continued from page 6)

Declaration of Emergency for Drought for 2005; and there are Type I helicopters available, at a cost of \$30,000.

FEMA Region VII was involved in the hurricane response in both North Carolina and in Florida. FEMA representative Dave Teska handed out a Fire Management sheet with the main points of the plan, the dollar amounts for the States, and information regarding the declaration process.

Nebraska Forest Service announced personnel changes. The new State Forester is Scott Josiah, formally the Extension Forester. George Texteria has taken Larry Wiles' place in planning. They are working with the Fire Marshal on Wildfire Awareness, and will be sponsoring a Wildfire Awareness Month (June) rather than an Awareness Week. The Proclamation will be on May 12.

John Overstreet is working on fuel treatment, and has mapped what has been thinned and what will be treated in the Pine Ridge Area

The Volunteer Fire Association reported that in the northwest they are actively doing recertification training. There is a full class Alliance in March and they will do Chadron in the fall. They have equipment ready for the fire season.

The thinning projects continue in the State Park and on Federal lands. The Federal program includes a "good neighbor" program to thin adjoining private land if necessary.

Part of the federal thinning project in the Chadron Creek is bundled for chipping. Chadron State College uses the chips for heating. Planning is underway to connect the heating tunnel with the high school to heat it. The new hospital is also looking at using wood chips for heating, and the college and an area mine are looking into

using the wood chips to generate electricity.

The Nebraska State Fire Marshal's Office is in the process of putting together the Type III Incident Management Team. They conducted a four-day training in Ogallala, with eight hours specifically addressing Wildfire IC. They are also training Deputy Fire Marshals for red carding and on writing SOPs for the Team. Questions on dispatching have arisen, and the feeling is that they would like dispatching to be done through NEMA.

Subsequently, a meeting was held on March 1 in Grand Island regarding the dispatch of team members. It was decided that once NEMA gets the go-ahead from the Fire Marshal's office, NEMA will have the Duty Officer (DO) call the nearest team member whenever there is a call for aerial suppression, or a notice of a large fire burning. If the DO cannot reach the nearest member, he or she will continue calling the members until one is contacted.

NEMA may also call team members following a report of a disaster to check out the situation and act as the state's eyes on the scene.

A third way the team may be activated is following a State Declaration of disaster. If the state's management group feels that state oversight of the operation is needed, they may call up the team or team members through NEMA.

In attendance were: Dave Clement, US Forest Service; David Teska, FEMA; Don Westover, Nebraska Forest Service; Pat Gould, State Fire Marshal/Volunteer Firemen's Association; Bruce Neeman, State Fire Marshal; Al Berndt, NEMA; Cindy Newsham, NEMA; Guy Moon, Nebraska Army National Guard; Dennis Hohbein, State Fire Marshal.

ULYSSES, SURROUNDING AREAS CONDUCT EXERCISE

Tornado response is the scenario

For a few moments there was a sense of power and control, looking down on the small town where they lived. The view from high above gave the impression that they could reach out and rearrange the community, direct the comings and goings of the community and its residents.

Then, for a few hours, there was the certain knowledge that there was only a small part of the world that they could control. Forces far larger than they dictated the actions that they would take, and the best that they could hope for was that they would rise to the occasion – that they could respond after the fact to protect and salvage.

Ulysses, Nebraska still lay spread out before them, but it was confined to a large table top. The Ulysses emergency responders were thrown into a training drill that required them to work through a disaster as if it had actually devastated their town. The scenario supposed that Ulysses had been struck by a major tornado, and the devastation was arrayed on the table, waiting for their response.

On March 5 2005 members of the Ulysses Volunteer Fire Department (UVFD) and more than 100 volunteers and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) from surrounding jurisdictions came together in Ulysses to work out the procedures and the cooperation that would enable them to respond to the real thing. Firefighters clustered around the model of a small town eerily similar to Ulysses and assessed damage, evaluated options and communicated with local officials via radio from the nearby community hall.

This was where all the preparation came together and they discovered whether their hours spent devising emergency operations plans and mutual aid agreements would serve them well. This activity is played out at least four times a year in Nebraska, under the auspices of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). NEMA's Exercise and Training Officers, under the guidance of their supervisor Henry Tamasi, work with local jurisdictions of all sizes across the state to conduct this type of training. Sometimes it's a tornado, sometimes a different sort of natural disaster. Occasionally it's a human or animal health crisis. Every once in a while it deals with nefarious man-made devices and attacks.

Whatever the script, the idea is to load the emergency response and management system to the breaking point and look for the places where it appears thin. When those seams begin to unravel, the agencies involved know where they need to strengthen the plan. And along the way they learn what they're doing right.

Knowing that you're on target goes a long way toward being ready when you have to turn out for real.

ARE YOU UTILIZING ALL OF YOUR SAFETY EQUIPMENT?

Michael Loftis, Radiological Systems Manager, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

It's just another routine fire and rescue call. A delivery truck has been involved in a head-on collision on the highway. The driver of the delivery truck is unconscious and the cab is on fire. Coming upon the scene, you scan the area and note the following items: smoke is coming from the cab, law enforcement has a person on the ground in a safe place and there are no placards noted on the truck. It is a fairly routine scene that happens too often around the country. Your first responders are ready for action; they have on their bunker gear, SCBE breathing apparatus, helmets and gloves. They are trained, energetic and have responded to similar accidents before.

The question is, are they really safe? The first responders have trained for fires, personnel rescue, hazardous materials, looking for safety hazards and protecting people, property and themselves. They have a good incident commander, who watches out for the team to make sure no one is injured, no unnecessary risks are taken and property damage is minimized. Yet, have they utilized all of their safety gear to the fullest potential or is something missing? Is the safety gear sitting on a shelf back at the station or packed away on a response vehicle but never even opened up?

What the first responders didn't know was that the truck was carrying a Class A box of radionuclides on the way to a hospital to be used for patient therapy. It was also transporting a small cesium 137 source to a manufacturing plant to be utilized in non-destructive testing. The impact of the accident caused the Class A box to slam into the cage door of the truck and it broke open. Vials of radionuclides splattered all over the cab of the truck and the driver before he was pulled from the wreckage by law enforcement personnel.

The Cesium 137 source was also in a Class A box and it slid off a shelf and fell on the bed of the truck. The casing broke open and the source, looking like a small lead wire, was sitting out in the open. In cleaning up the accident, fire responders had been through the cab of the truck, making sure anything smoking wouldn't re-ignite the fire. In the back of the truck, a firefighter swept up the junk on the floor and put it in a bucket, then put the bucket in the equipment truck. It wasn't until later that somebody noticed a "nuclear materials" package and began asking questions. By that time the ambulance had taken the injured driver to the hospital and the equipment truck had headed back to the fire house to get ready for the next response.

Now, I know you're sitting there reading this article

and saying "How far-fetched is this? A truck crashes, the driver is unconscious and the bill of lading has gone up in smoke. The whole mess is almost cleaned up and then they find radioactive materials"?

My point is this: every day more and more nuclear material is being transported on our roads. Small hospitals are now doing more sophisticated treatment and testing, keeping their patients close to home instead of going to the bigger treatment facilities. Businesses are finding ways to do such things as non-destructive testing, utilizing nuclear materials to improve quality and efficiency. Nuclear doesn't just mean bombs, power plants or movies on television — it now means improving quality of life and safety. Nuclear materials are utilized in ways the average person just doesn't realize, and it's not for worse. It is also not just interstate or main highways now, but the potential is there for any road that leads to the "Good Life" in Nebraska.

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency provides a CD V-777 kit, which includes a CD V 700 (low range beta/gamma) survey meter, a CD V 715 (high-range gamma) survey meter, a CD V 750 (pocket dosimeter charger), two CD V 742's (personal pocket dosimeters) and instructions on how to utilize them properly. **The kit and the training are provided at no cost to the community.**

Again, I hear the moans of first responders saying "More equipment to learn how to use? When do we have time?"

My question is "**When you can't see, feel, smell, or hear radiation, how do you detect it before it contaminates you, your family, your friends and your community?**". The only way is for a first responder to routinely take out the CD V 700, turn it on, and do a good survey of the area, ensuring either no contamination is found or the contamination is isolated until the health physicists decide what to do. **It needs to be done every time there is the possibility of radioactive materials being transported**, so it might as well just become part of the SOP for vehicle accidents and fires!

If your community doesn't have a CD V 777 kit and you would like one, or to learn more, contact your Emergency Manager. They can make arrangements with Mike Loftis, Radiological Systems Manager (402-471-7190) or Jon Schwarz, Radiological Programs Manager (402-471-7420) at NEMA to conduct the training. We look forward to working with you and your Emergency Manager

AN OPEN LETTER TO COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGERS

Jon Schwarz, NEMA Radiological Programs Manager

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are finally getting people qualified again to present radiological training. To begin planning and scheduling radiological training, we request your assistance.

Please talk with the Emergency First Responder Agencies within your jurisdictions and determine if you need Radiological Emergency First Responder Training needs updating. FEMA recommends refresher training every two years while OSHA requires refresher training annually. My records indicate many of your jurisdictions need at least some radiological refresher training. If you are in need of radiological response training, contact Jon Schwarz, Radiological Programs Manager via letter, e-mail (jon.schwarz@nema.state.ne.us), or telephone (402) 471-7420.

Also please contact your hospitals, especially those of you whose jurisdictions are along the I-80 and UP rail corridor. Please find out if they would like Radiological Training in handling radiologically contaminated patients.

If your hospitals desire to receive radiological training, have them get in touch with Jon Schwarz, Radiological Programs Manager via letter, e-mail (jon.schwarz@nema.state.ne.us), or telephone (402) 471-7420. Jon requests that interested hospitals contact him by April 15th. If there are enough interested hospitals, Jon will contact DOE and see if they will provide a number of Hospital courses in Nebraska this year or early next year.

The U. S. Department of Energy Course "Modular Emergency Response Radiological Transportation Training" (MERRTT) has been approved to be listed with other available Federal training courses available to States and Tribes. The course is composed of 18 modules that can be taught in approximately one-half to three-quarter hour increments. The course includes modules that support radiological awareness, operations, and technician training. The course can be taught over a period of days, weeks, or in two four-hour periods of instruction or one eight hour period of instruction. Modules include: (1) DOE Shipments and Resources, (2) Radiological Basics, (3) Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation, (4) Hazard Recognition, (5) Initial Response Actions, (6) RAM Shipment Packages, (7) Patient Handling, (8) Radiological Terminology & Units, (9) Incident Control, (10) Radiological Survey Instruments & Dosimetry Devices, (11) Accessing Package Integrity, (12) Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, (13) Decontamination, Disposal and Documentation, (14) Transportation by Rail, (15) Transportation Safeguards Material, (16) Pre-Hospital Practices, (17) Incident Command, and (18) Public Information Officer.

Nebraska has several qualified instructors already and we are just waiting for the arrival of equipment to support the course before these instructors can present the course.

For your information, DOE is not planning a large number of shipments through Nebraska this year.

However, shipments of radiological materials do continue. In 2003, Nebraska saw 57 "reported" shipments of radiological waste or materials. In 2004, there were 46 "reported" shipments of radiological waste or materials, and by mid-March 2005, there will have been 12 "reported" shipments of radiological materials. This does not include radiological shipments which do not meet the minimum NRC reporting requirements or classified shipments.

Finally, it appears now that the "Private Fuel Storage" facility in Utah will be licensed and in operation by 2007. This means that Nebraska can expect that nuclear power stations in the eastern United States who belong to the PFS consortium will be shipping spent nuclear fuel from their spent nuclear fuel pools to the PFS over I-80 or via rail through Nebraska.

So check on your radiological training needs and get with Jon.

BASIC, ADVANCED ACADEMIES DRAW 40

Forty participants from a wide range of disciplines gathered in North Platte in early March for the Basic and Advanced Emergency Management Academies.

Attendees represented emergency management, fire and police agencies, as well as the Department of Corrections and the Red Cross.



Topics covered included the National Incident Management System (NIMS), the Incident Command System (ICS), hazmat, meth labs, and exercise planning. An evening tour of the Union Pacific Bailey Yard filled an evening.

The next Academy is scheduled for August 22-26, 2005, and will be held in Lincoln.



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY ANNOUNCES APPLICATION PERIOD FOR ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS AND SAFER GRANTS

March 4, 2005 - Beginning March 7, 2005 at 8:00 a.m. eastern standard time, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will begin accepting applications for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) grant program. The deadline for receipt of the AFG fire grant applications is 5:00 p.m. eastern standard time on April 8, 2005. DHS also announced today that the application period for the AFG Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants will begin on May 31, 2005 and continue through June 28, 2005. Fire Prevention and Firefighter Safety grant applications will be accepted in September 2005.

The applications are automated and accessible via the AFG website: www.firegrantsupport.com. This website contains useful background information on AFG program priorities and program guidance, as well as a tutorial on applying for each program and other useful materials. Fire departments that have questions regarding these grant opportunities should contact the Help Desk at 1-866-274-0960 or at firegrants@dhs.gov.

The AFG is administered by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP). The AFG program assists rural, urban and suburban fire departments throughout the United States. In addition, in 2005, the AFG allows for non-fire based EMS organizations to apply for grants. These funds are used by the nation's firefighters to increase the effectiveness of firefighting and emergency response operations, to improve firefighter health and safety programs. The SAFER Grants provide funding for the hiring of fire personnel and incentives for volunteer recruitment and retention. Through the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2005, Congress provided \$715 million for the Assistance to Firefighters Grants, with \$65 million of this funding specified for SAFER.

NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL CONFERENCE SLATED FOR APRIL 15-17 2005

The Nebraska Association of Emergency Management (NAEM) will hold it's annual conference April 15-17 in Grand Island. The theme for this year's gathering is "Staying Alive in 2005".

Registration begins at noon on Friday, April 15, and Nebraska Lt. Governor Richard Sheehy is scheduled to address the group at 1:15 pm. The conference will draw to a close at Noon on Sunday, April 17.

On the agenda for the session are presentations on State and Federal Disaster Assistance, the State of Communication in Nebraska, the Lancaster and Gage County Disaster associated with the Hallam tornado in May of 2004, Preventing/Responding to School Tragedies, Citizen Corps in Nebraska, and an Open Forum with Public Health Emergency Response Coordinators.

Also of interest to attendees will be updated information on the 2005 Homeland Security Grant Program.